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The Future of Canada

Address delivered by J. M. CLARK, K.C. before the Mulock Club,
Toronto

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THE FUTURE OF CANADA

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Mr. President and Gentlemen :—

It was with great pleasure that I accepted your invitation to introduce the discussion in your Club of this subject, which must always have a keen interest for every thoughtful Canadian.

It is important to know the history of Canada—no mean history. It is true also that our duty lies in the present. But neither nations nor individuals can rise higher than their ideals, and it is therefore of moment that Canadians should form and cherish just and adequate national conceptions and noble national aspirations.

It may be said that Canada is now happy and contented. We enjoy peace, security and prosperity. Immigrants are flocking to our country, our trade is expanding and our resources being recognized and developed as never before. Therefore, it is said we should let well enough alone, and let the future take care of itself. To this the obvious reply is that the slightest reflection upon recent events must convince every thinking man that our present colonial status and the existing relations between Canada and Great Britain cannot be regarded as permanent. Canadians will never be content with anything less than full citizenship in the highest and completest sense. Rights always involve corresponding obligations, and if we desire the rights and privileges of nationhood we must also assume the corresponding responsibilities.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

At present Canadians have the fullest control over their local affairs, but our foreign relations, which must with the growth of Canadian commerce and shipping, become increasingly important, are now controlled by the Imperial Government, who are responsible to the Imperial Parliament, that is, to the electors of England, Scotland and Ireland. Some adequate remedy must be found for this condition of affairs, which will give Canadians as full rights as Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen.

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While technically the control of the foreign relations of the Empire, including those of Canada, is vested in the Crown, the Crown acting in such matters on the advice of the Imperial Government, who are responsible to the Imperial Parliament and not to Canada, it must be borne in mind that attention has practically been paid to the views of Canada in most instances in which Canadian interests are involved.

The treaty of Washington was made subject to the approval of the Canadian Parliament.

The Blaine-Bond treaty between Newfoundland and the United States, containing terms very prejudicial to Canadian interests, was vetoed by the Imperial Government at the instance of Canada.

The German and Belgian treaties, which stood in the way of preferential trade arrangements between the various parts of the British Empire, were denounced in response to the request of Canada.

On the International Commission, still existing, to settle questions between Canada and the United States, all the Commissioners except one (the late Lord Hershell) were Canadians.

These expedients, however, must be regarded as temporary makeshifts. A permanent solution of the problem must be found which will give Canada an efficient and effective voice in the control of the foreign relations of the Empire in which she is specially interested.

INDEPENDENCE.

In the past some few enthusiastic Canadians advocated Canadian independence as the solution of all such difficulties. It is now clear that this was an empty and idle dream. Canada as an independent nation now or in the near future would only enjoy such rights as more powerful nations would permit. In other words, we would hold our independence on the sufferance of others. That would be a sham and not a real independence, an utterly intolerable position. Even in Toronto life and property must be protected. Even here we cannot yet dispense with the police. The world has not yet reached such a state of civilization that a country, situated as Canada is, could allow itself to dispense with the means of defence. A careful study of the history of Columbia and Panama, of Mexico, Texas and California must dampen the ardour of those who advocate Canadian independence, unless, indeed, they advocate it as a step towards the incorporation of the Canadian provinces and territories into the United States.

BRITISH CONNECTION VERSUS ANNEXATION.

The only real alternatives for Canada are incorporation into the United States and British connection. Before a Canadian audience I shall not attempt to argue which of these alternatives we should accept, for as a people Canadians have determined that Canada shall ever remain an integral portion of the British Empire.

As to annexation it is sufficient to say that Canadians have struggled too long for the preservation, extension and development of their country ever to permit the fair name of Canada to be blotted from the map of the world.

Some writers have pointed to the Canadian preference and the despatch of the colonial contingents to South Africa to fight for British ideals of liberty and justice as the commencement of the consolidation of the British Empire. There is great force in this view, for they enabled the people of the British Empire and of the world to realize as never before the essential unity and solidarity of the British Empire. But the real beginnings must be referred to much earlier dates. There is not time to go into the glorious story of the expansion of England.

SELF-GOVERNMENT AND CONFEDERATION.

For the purposes of our discussion here to-night we may commence with the achievement of self-government by the old Provinces of Canada. This system of local self-government has been fully developed in this country, and, as is now generally recognized, its maintenance is absolutely essential to Imperial unity. The next great step I shall refer to was the formation of the Canadian Confederation in 1867 with the constitution set forth in the statute of the Imperial Parliament, known as the British North America act. Originally only the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were included in the Canadian Confederation.

Subsequently in 1870 Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories were acquired by Canada. British Columbia joined the union in 1871 and Prince Edward Island in 1873.

By an Imperial Order-in-Council, dated the 31st July, 1880, to take effect on the 1st of September, 1880, all the other British possessions and territories in North America, with the islands adjacent thereto, except Newfoundland and its dependencies, were annexed to Canada by Great Britain.

It is under this Order-in-Council that Canada claims title to the islands which command the entrance to Hudson Bay, whose future importance has not yet been fully realized by Canadians. The action of the Canadian Government in sending the Low expedition to investigate conditions there is to be commended, and it is to be hoped that prompt and effective measures will be taken to safeguard the interests of Canada and of the Empire in those regions, and the interests of the Empire have been in that respect entrusted to the vigilance and patriotism of the Canadian people.

By the means above briefly outlined Canada has been extended so that it now contains an estimated area of 3,574,980 square miles, about forty per cent. of the whole area of the British Empire.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The British North America Act contains a provision looking to the incorporation of the Island of Newfoundland, Great Britain's oldest colony, into

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the Canadian Confederation, thus as the phrase is "rounding-off Confederation." It is to be regretted that the negotiations carried on by Sir Mackenzie Bowell for the consummation of this union failed, and it is to be hoped that the negotiations now foreshadowed will be more successful. We must bear in mind that to Newfoundland belongs a strip of the coast of Labrador, extending from the Hudson Straits to the Straits of Belle Isle. The part of Labrador belonging to Newfoundland was formally described in 1876 in these words :

"All the coast of Labrador from the entrance to Hudson's Straits to a line to be drawn due north and south from Anse Sablon on said coast."

A glance at the map will indicate how disastrous it would be to allow the control of this strip of coast, which includes such harbors as Hamilton Inlet or of Newfoundland, to be permanently lost to Canada or the Empire. Canada must control the navigation of the St. Lawrence, that magnificent entrance to this continent, which it would not do if Newfoundland or Labrador were in alien hands.

In passing I may remark that in the event of Newfoundland becoming part of the Canadian Dominion, as was long ago recommended by Lord Durham, there would be permanent free trade between Canada and Newfoundland.

This is one of the cases in which all schools of thought admit that free trade is beneficial. The union would be more beneficial to Newfoundland than to Canada, but it is sufficient for us that it would be to the advantage of Canada.

UNITY OF BRITISH EMPIRE.

Some years ago the colonies were regarded as a source of weakness to the Empire, and the breaking-up of the Empire anticipated as both desirable and inevitable. There are few, if any, representatives of this school of thought among the responsible British public men of the present day.

It is sometimes erroneously claimed that Gladstone was an anti-Imperialist. There is no foundation for the charge that his policy aimed at getting rid of the colonies. On the contrary, he eloquently described the nobleness of the inheritance which had descended upon the British Empire, and the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it.

One of the most noticeable features of the magnificent fiscal controversy now being carried on in Great Britain is that both sides claim to be champions of the unity of the British Empire. The strongest arguments that Mr. Chamberlain uses are that his proposals tend towards the consolidation of the British Empire. The most powerful of his opponents, such as Lord Rosebery, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Morley, Mr. Haldane and Sir Edward Grey, equally recognize the paramount importance of Imperial unity. In one of his recent speeches Mr. Morley stated that, if any part of the Empire were attacked, England would expend the last shot in her locker in its defence.

As in England so in Canada, the forces that make for the unity of the British Empire have been greater than those that make for disintegration.

In proof of this, it is sufficient to refer to the Canadian preference, the sending of Canadian contingents to South Africa to fight for the integrity of the Empire, Imperial penny postage, with which the distinguished patron of this Club, Sir William Mulock, will ever be honourably associated and the all British Pacific cable—to these must now be added the preference given to the trade of Canada and the other parts of the Empire by the Customs Union of South Africa and the preference granted by New Zealand. Equally important is the system of periodical conferences at which the common interests of the Empire will be discussed by representatives of the British Dominions beyond the seas.

It is now an easy matter to prove that the disintegration of this great Empire would be disastrous to the best interests of Canada and Great Britain, and also would be the greatest blow that could be struck at the interests of liberty, civilization and humanity.

It has become a maxim that the existence of the Empire and the security of Great Britain depend on the maintenance of British sea power. Without such coaling stations as Halifax on the Atlantic and Esquimalt on the Pacific the maritime supremacy of British naval power would be seriously jeopardized.

The secession of Canada from Great Britain would probably therefore spell the loss of naval supremacy by the British Empire and danger to the safety of Great Britain. It is fortunate, therefore, that in connection with and as an integral part of the British Empire Canada can reach her highest development.

There has been a good deal of discussion as to whether the marvellous industrial development of the United States has been due more to the system of protection against foreign countries or to the system of free trade between the States comprising the union.

I shall not enter into that controversy, but would claim that the great progress of the United States is due largely to the fact that between 1821 and 1900 over six million eight hundred thousand emigrants went from Great Britain and Ireland to the United States, a number exceeding the present population of Canada. In addition hundreds of millions of British money were invested in the development of the great natural resources of the United States.

The British Empire contains within its limits greater undeveloped national resources than were ever possessed by the United States.

It seems to me, therefore, that it should not be beyond the capacity of British statesmanship to devise means for making it advantageous that the surplus population of various parts of the Empire should emigrate to other parts of the Empire, rather than to foreign countries.

All British emigrants coming to Canada add to the strength of the Empire. The purchases of British goods by Canadians are per capita many times those of the Americans. Some of our friends object to the people of the United States monopolizing the word "American," but the name "Canadian" is good enough for me.

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CANADIAN RESOURCES.

We have now in Canada the greatest area of undeveloped wheat land in the world. In our own Province of Ontario there is a much greater area of suitable land remaining to be cultivated than is at present under cultivation.

Even to the people in Ontario the suitability of large parts of New Ontario for agricultural purposes was not known until a few years ago, but it is now quite safe to predict that within a very few years the agricultural production of Ontario will be doubled.

The other day we read in the papers of the completion of the preliminary survey of the route of the Grand Trunk Pacific from Winnipeg to Abitibi. A few years ago the name Abitibi was little known even in Ontario and was associated with the great frozen north. We did not realize that it was south of the northern parts of Minnesota and Dakota, that it is considerably south of the great agricultural district of Midlothian in Scotland.

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Then in regard to Manitoba and the Northwest the case is much stronger. In Ontario the agricultural production can be doubled; in Manitoba and in the Northwest Territories it is now reasonably certain that the production will be increased tenfold and even twentyfold within the next few years. According to the Department of the Interior, the prairie country occupies a stretch of land from east of the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, about one hundred and fifty townships wide, with an average of fifty townships deep. In the Province of Manitoba the grain-growing area has not this depth, but farther west the depth is much greater, the isothermal lines running not east and west, but northwest and southeast.

From the information which the Department of the Interior have it is quite clear that there are known to be at least ninety-two million acres of land suitable for wheat-growing, of which the merest fraction has as yet been cultivated. Lord Strathcona, who knows the Northwest as few men know it, was, therefore, well within the mark when he said in London the other day that within ten years Canada can produce all the grain required by Great Britain.

CANADIAN DEVELOPMENT.

The best market for the surplus agricultural products of Canada is undoubtedly Great Britain, and therefore not merely on the ground of sentiment, but also of mutual interest Canada should cultivate to the greatest possible extent trade relations with the mother country.

Canada will be great not only as an agricultural country, but also as a manufacturing and commercial country. The mineral production of Canada has increased six hundred per cent. since 1886, and we are only at the commencement of the development of our mineral resources. The Canadian fisheries are unrivalled. When the advantageous situation of our water powers in relation to important raw materials is considered Canadians will realize

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what a potential source of wealth these water powers are and what an important part they are destined to play in the industrial development of the future.

Canadian foreign trade has doubled within a few years and now exceeds four hundred million dollars per annum. The trade for the quarter ending on 30th September last was \$133,758,124. He would be a rash man indeed who would place any limits to Canadian development.

Not many years will elapse before the population of Canada will exceed that of England, now the predominant partner in the British Empire.

FEDERATION OF THE EMPIRE.

The fears and hopes that the grant to Canada of local self-government and the formation of the Canadian Confederation would lead to the severance of the ties binding Canada to Great Britain have both proved quite unfounded. Similarly the formation of the Australian Commonwealth should be properly regarded as an important step in the direction of the consolidation, not of the disintegration of the British Empire.

The Federal principle so successfully applied in Canada and Australia will, there is good ground for hoping, be also successfully applied in South Africa. Having the ground so far prepared, we should now strive for the supreme, the Imperial Confederacy of the United Nations of Greater Britain.

There is a growing feeling that Canada ought to bear her fair share of the burden of Imperial defence. Canadian shipping and interests abroad are now defended by the British navy at the expense of the taxpayers of England, Scotland and Ireland.

In the Behring Sea matter, for instance, the seizure of Canadian ships was prevented solely by the presence of British ships of war in the Pacific.

The United Kingdom paid the expense, Canada received the benefit.

Ordinary self-respect will prevent Canadians allowing this state of affairs to continue permanently, especially as according to Sir Robert Giffin, the eminent statistician, the wealth of Canada is \$240 per capita, while that of England is \$210 per capita. The wealth of the United States, by the way, was estimated at \$175 per capita.

While Canadians are willing to pay what is right towards the defence of their interests, yet it must be done in a proper way and under sufficient safeguards. Canada has now no voice in the control of the navy, and the principle that among free men there can be no taxation without representation is too fundamental to be tampered with. As Sir Wilfrid Laurier said to the people of Great Britain, if you want us to help you call us to your Councils.

At the last session of the Dominion Parliament some provision was made for making the Canadian militia more efficient and effective. This was done with general approval and is a step in the right direction.

It is, however, only a step and cannot be regarded as a permanent solution of the question.

In passing I may point out that even if Canada contributed her full proportion according to population to the defence of the Empire our payment

would only be a fraction of what would be absolutely necessary if Canada were an independent nation, and would be much less than we would have to pay towards the expenses of army, navy and pensions if we were part of the United States.

It is argued that preparations for war encourage a spirit of militarism. I am utterly opposed to militarism and jingoism, but hold that in the union and strength of the British Empire and in the adequate preparation for the defence of all its parts is the best guarantee of the peace of the world.



This address was delivered before the Mulock Club, Toronto, on the 23rd November, 1903, and at the conclusion a motion was unanimously carried thanking Mr. Clark for his able and instructive address and directing the Executive Committee to have it printed for distribution.